***The Pastor-Teacher - PH10-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:1***

We open the Word of truth once more to the book of Philippians. We're continuing with the church visible, and this is part number three. We have seen that as the New Testament books were written, the divine plan for the local church was gradually unfolded. Now I want to direct your attention to the matter of the organization of the local church.

**Apostles**

We have to begin with that which constituted the role of the apostles. On the day of Pentecost, the Lord Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to indwell all believers permanently, and to give them certain spiritual gifts for service. This is taught in John 14:16, John 16:7, and Ephesians 4:7-11. One of the gifts that was delivered on that day was the gift of apostle. This gift was designed for the establishment of local churches. An apostle was responsible for certain churches which he established. He became their spiritual guide and their judge. An apostle was, in effect, a spiritual dictator over the churches which he founded. His authority extended to all the churches that were under his care; that is, all the churches that he had brought into being.

The apostle, being in that position of authority, would appoint the elders for these various local churches, as you have in Acts 14:23. These elders were appointed in the various churches to rule and to teach the congregation during the absence of the apostle. When the apostle was on the scene, he would handle the business. However, when he left, he appointed the elders who were to take charge. He would (or he would delegate someone to) come with the authority to handle these matters. Either the apostle or his delegate would handle disputes in the churches that arose, and would communicate appropriate doctrinal information to these churches to handle the disputes which they faced. We find this in 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, 2 Corinthians 7:13-15, 2 Corinthians 8:16-24, and Titus 1:5. It was in the matter of handling the problems that arose in the local church, under an apostle's authority, that led to the writing of the New Testament Epistles. These books were written in order to answer specific problems, and to communicate church age doctrine to the congregations that the apostle had founded. Each apostle then had his own area of responsibility, and his own group of churches that he dealt with (Galatians 2:7-8, 2 Corinthians 11:28).

These men had this kind of a unique authority gift given them from God. What was going to happen when they all die off? What's going to happen when all the men like Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, and all the associates (like Luke) and so on, when they all die? There will be no more apostolic delegates. What's going to happen? Well, the problem was compounded because an apostle could not pass on his gift to another man. No spiritual gift can be passed on to another person. Whatever your spiritual gift is, you cannot pass it on to your children. God the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives each of us the spiritual gifts that we have. So, only the Holy Spirit could give the gift of an apostle, and He could only give that to one who had been an eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This gift of complete spiritual authority over a group of local churches either had to be continued with other apostles being appointed by God the Holy Spirit with the gift of apostle, or some other arrangement had to be made for the local church operation. Well, we know that the gift of apostle ceased with the death of John. Apostles did not continue after all the apostles themselves had died. This is a temporary gift, and it is not in existence today. There is nobody who is in charge of a number of churches.

There are certain denominations, like the Methodists, who will have a bishop who, in effect, views himself as being in apostolic succession. Once a year, that bishop looks over his churches. He looks over his pool of pastors. Then he plays solitaire at his desk. He says, "This pastor goes to this church; this pastor goes to this church; and this pastor goes to this church." Then the congregation gets a letter, and the congregation hears that for this year, your pastor will be Sam Jones. As to who it may be next year, it might be Sam Jones, or it might be John Brown. However, you as a congregation don't have any control over who your pastor is going to be. That is given to a supposed apostolic successor.

This is taken from the idea of what did exist when apostles were on the scene. However, only the Holy Spirit gives this gift, and when they died, another arrangement had to be made. Since another arrangement had to be made, and since this is a temporary gift, it would seem that the apostles themselves would have had the wisdom to have started moving local churches toward the structure that was to exist after they were off the scene. This gift of complete spiritual authority was necessary until the canon of Scripture was completed. When the canon of Scripture was completed, the foundation of the church was laid. We have this in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, Ephesians 2:20, and Hebrews 2:3-4. Now that the Scriptures are complete, there is no such thing as direct revelation from God such as the apostles would receive. When a problem arose, when information was needed in the church, they looked to the Lord. The Lord gave a revelation to the apostle, and the apostle passed the information on to that church. That is not the arrangement we have today.

**Authority in the Local Church**

The apostles did arrange for the structure which was to follow them. There was a period of gradual growth in the local ministry, from the day of Pentecost to the day at Patmos when John finally died. The apostles' authority in revelation was replaced by a completed canon of scripture (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). The apostles' authority of administration over many churches also had to be replaced by something, and that was replaced by a structure of authority resident in each local church independently. In other words, every local church was autonomous. Nobody outside of the congregation itself could make any decisions for that local church. There was no pope; there was no bishop; there was no priest; and, there was nobody in authority over that individual local church except the members of the congregation themselves.

Within the autonomous local church, the rule or the authority was now vested in what the Scriptures refer to either as an elder, or a bishop. They're the same person. You can call him an elder-bishop. Because he was to do the work of shepherding, he was called a pastor. So, an elder bishop pastor was placed in authority in each local church, replacing the authority that once existed through an apostle. This is taught in 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:2, and Hebrews 13:7, 17. The fact that the congregation is independent is indicated, in part, by the fact that the congregation can remove the pastor elder bishop from the authority that he has in that local church (1 Timothy 5:19). A congregation decides whom God has led to head up that work. A congregation decides when that leadership is to be terminated. The congregation is the final voice in the local church.

Men within a local congregation, consequently, would aspire to the office of the elder bishop (1 Timothy 3:1). What this means is that a man would recognize, "I have the gift of pastor-teacher." The first thing that anybody who is going to eventually be a pastor has to recognize is that he has the gift of pastor-teacher. There are several factors that he would consider, not the least of which would be that he has the ability of the spiritual gift of teaching. He is able to communicate the Word of God so people understand it; so they see it; and, so they are convinced. However, the pastor-teacher has to, first of all, recognize that he has the gift.

False doctrine was to be handled by the congregation itself. This is another indication that they were independent. They didn't go to an outside group who came in and made decisions. There wasn't a super bishop who would impose a decision upon that church when it had problems. It dealt with that problem from within its own congregation (1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Galatians 6:1, Titus 3:10, 2 John 10, Jude 20-23). In the last epistles of the New Testament, which were written by the apostle John, we have the fact noted that he avoids the term "apostle," and he stresses the word "elder." We have this in 2 John 1 and 3 John 1. He refers to himself as an elder. This is indicative of the fact that a transition is taking place from apostolic super authority to local church independent authority.

The apostle Peter, who wrote just before John did, also emphasizes the word "elder" rather than the word "apostle" (1 Peter 5:1). This indicated that Peter, writing near the end of the completion of the New Testament, was also stressing that the elder is the man of the hour now--no longer apostles. They're passing off the scene.

The progress of New Testament revelation reflects the fact that the apostles envisioned an independent congregation; that is, a congregational type of local church government after their departure and after their death. The congregation has the power to invest a man with the elder bishop authority as pastor. One from their own midst is the most desirable way, that they themselves have ordained to that ministry. The congregation has the ultimate authority also to remove a pastor, as that authority has been delegated to them by Christ. The voting members of the congregation are the stockholders. They are the final decision makers, even though the elder bishop pastor is exercising their delegated authority.

**The Role of the Pastor**

So let's look at the role of the elder bishop. Is the authority in the local church and the conduct of the local church for the decision making in the local church to be vested in one man, or is it to be vested in a committee--a group of men? We must begin by stating that there is no Scripture to be found that says either way. There is no single passage of Scripture (which could easily solve this for us) that says authority is to be vested in one elder bishop pastor, or authority is to be vested in a group of elders who act as a committee or as a board. So we have to decide this issue, not on a specific Scripture, but on the practice of the New Testament Church as we find this practice reflected in Scripture.

We do this, for example, for our worship day. Why do we worship on Sunday? It's not because there is a verse in the Bible that says, "You will no longer worship on Saturday as did the Jews, but you will henceforth now worship on Sunday." We don't have any verse in the Bible that says that at all. Why do we do that? We worship on Sunday because this is the evolved practice of the New Testament church. We find this fact recorded for us in the New Testament. Therefore, we act upon following that custom. We find recorded for us in the New Testament the fact that each local church is to be administered by one elder. He is to be in charge of the work. Whatever you may want to call him, there is an executive head. Whatever you may want to call his assistants, they are simply associates assisting him in the ministry. They are not authorities over him. Over the elder bishop pastor, there is only one authority in the local church, and that is the congregation as a whole itself.

**Single Authority**

Alright, let's take a look and see why we say that the Bible indicates that there should be one single authority. There are several reasons for this:

1. One is the condition of ancient **cities**. The problem there refers particularly to the size. Most ancient cities were small, but the commercial centers, such as Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus were very large. They were large in territory, and they were large in population, even by today's standards. It is unlikely that one of these large cities had only one local congregation meeting together as a church. Christians in large cities, therefore, would face the problem of being able to transport themselves. Suppose you lived on one side of the city of Corinth, and the local assembly was on the other side of the city. There could literally be miles and miles across that city for you to get over to where the congregation is meeting. You would have a transportation problem that you and I don't appreciate because there was no Corinth city transit system for you to grab a bus to get over to where the meeting was being held. This in itself would pose a real major problem for you to get there.

Furthermore, there was the problem that travel in such large cities in the ancient world was not safe. It had elements of danger to which the people would be exposed in making such a crossing of the city. So, large cities, consequently, we may logically decide and deduce, must have produced many local churches within the limits of that city. Every local church had to have a pastor-teacher (an elder bishop). Every city, consequently, with many churches would have many elder bishops. This is where the plurality idea comes from. It is not plurality in one local church, but it is the fact of plurality within the city--there were several churches. So Paul would write and say, "I want the elders of the city of Ephesus to meet me at Miletus for a final farewell meeting." All the pastors from all the different churches are what met Paul at Miletus. It wasn't the pastors from one single church that met Paul. It was plurality within a territory.

That's why we tried to point out in the previous session that the word "church" can be used as we have it in Corinthians. It starts with the word "church" singular. Yet, we get to chapter 14, and it talks about how women should conduct themselves in the "churches" in Corinth, and it's in the plural. So the word church can be used in a local sense to refer to many individual assemblies.

1. There is another problem that they would have to face, and that is concerning **buildings**. The Christians, as we know from Scripture, gathered in homes. These constituted the local churches. Any group that would gather for worship and for edification became a local church (1 Corinthians 11:18, 20, 1 Corinthians 14:26). Public buildings did not come into use for Christian meetings until the third century. The first church within a city would be founded in somebody's home, but as converts were won in that area, outside of the city and throughout the city, it would become impossible for hundreds and hundreds of believers to meet in one house. Consequently, other houses had to be open for the believers to meet in. Each house required one elder bishop pastor. So we have, again, a plurality of elders, but a plurality from a city because of the multiple churches.

While the founding apostle was present there in the city, he did the teaching; he did the administering; and, he handled the problems for all the churches that he founded. However, when he left, he had to delegate his responsibility to someone to rule and to conduct the work, and that someone was an elder bishop who was appointed (one to a church) to teach and to take charge. You have this in Titus 1:5 and Acts 14:21, 23. The apostle, when writing back to the believers in one of these large cities would address them all together as constituting the church in that place, though they were meeting in several congregations. The idea was that he was addressing a territorial church (1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Corinthians 14:34).

So, in our book of Philippians here, Paul is addressing the saints which are at Philippi, and he says, "with bishops," and there is our word "elder bishop." When he is writing to the church at Philippi and to multiple bishops, he means that there are several churches in Philippi, and along with their spiritual leaders, the elder bishop, and with their administrators who were assisting the elder bishop (the deacons), in the various churches, he addresses them as a territorial church. In Philippians 4:15, he says, "Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving but you only." There again he's showing a large area, talking about individual believers in different places in Macedonia, and yet he's writing this letter as if there was just one church in this area--the church at Philippi. These were several churches viewed as a whole.

1. We have the **description** of the office of the elder bishop pastor in 1 Timothy 3 and in Titus 1. This is a very significant proof of a singular elder bishop in every church. In 1 Timothy 3:1, it says, "This is a true saying. If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work." Then he goes on in verse 2 and says, "A bishop must be," and he proceeds to give the characteristics and qualifications for an elder bishop; that is, for a pastor of a local church. You notice it is singular. A bishop must be this.

However, you will notice that, as he moves over and begins taking up the other church officers, he says in verse 12, "Let the deacons be," and then he lists their qualifications. You will notice that deacons are in plural. It speaks about the office of deacon in verse 13, but the office of deacon is filled by a plurality of deacons as you see by verse 12. Whereas when he speaks about the office of the pastor (bishop), he goes on in verse 2 to speak of him in the singular. It is very important that you notice that.

This is one of the primary proofs that we have in the Word of God that the church structure that evolved in the New Testament was one elder bishop pastor under the authority of the congregation, and all boards under his authority, which included several deacons and a board, and whatever other groups any church in any age might deem necessary for the assisting of the elder bishop in the context of that particular work in its particular expression. We have this same factor noted in Titus 1:5 where Titus is told by Paul to appoint elders, but when he goes on to describe that appointment, he describes it in terms of the singular--a single elder. Verse 5 says, "Ordain elders in every city." He tells us to appoint elders, and then he goes on and describes him in terms of a singular. Verse 7: "A bishop must be," and so on. So 1 Timothy and Titus indicate singularity of the elder bishop office within a local church.

You might ask about 1 Timothy 5. We ought to look at this because this question comes up. Some people say, "Well, look. You've got more than one elder here in one church." In 1 Timothy 5:17-18, it says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine, for the scripture says, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain,' and, 'the labor is worthy of his hire.'" The implication is suggested here that there are two kinds of elders: elders who rule, who are administrators; and, elders who teach. This cannot be the case because every elder bishop has to have the gift of teaching. He must be able to teach, and this constitutes the primary function of his gift.

You find this in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9. You cannot be an elder bishop (a pastor) unless you have the pastor-teacher gift. Those elder bishops who are worthy of double honor here (that is, double pay), are those who rule well in the local church. How they rule well in the local church is indicated by the fact that they labor faithfully in Word and doctrine; that is, that they are faithful instructors of the Word of God to the congregation. The elder that should be esteemed for a pay raise is not the guy who comes by and socializes with you. This is not the person who runs around every time you call with a problem to listen to your grievances, although he's available for your counseling to whatever extent he can be of use to you that way.

However, the person who is worthy of your financial care and provision is the one who faithfully teaches the Word. He really explains the Word to you. I don't mean that he gets up and preaches. There are plenty of people who are getting up and preaching all over this city, preaching about nothing, and people are just as ignorant after the service is over as they were when they came in. I'm talking about what the Bible is talking about--somebody who explains the Word of God to you. That kind of an elder is worthy of considerable financial remuneration. These are the ones who are ruling well.

In Revelation 7, you will remember that we have messengers. These letters are addressed to the messenger of the church at Ephesus, Smyrna, and so on. The Greek uses the word "angel" ("aggelos") which means messenger, but it is in the singular. In all likelihood, the messenger (the communicator) that is in view there is the elder bishop pastor again. The leader of the church is the one that is addressed in each of those letters, and it is a singular leader. It is not plurality of leadership.

1. We see the disuse of the word **"apostle"** as the New Testament is written, and the increase of the word "elder." This indicates who is going to replace the apostle--the single elder in every individual local church. Also, there is the fact of the pre-canon and the post-canon period, and there is a comparison here. In the pre-canon period, we had leadership in the form of an apostle. He was the authority. In the post-canon period, we have authority again in the local church, but now it is the elder bishop pastor. We don't suddenly come to a point after the New Testament is written, and there is no leadership. There was leadership before; and, there is leadership afterward.
2. In comparing this to the Jewish synagogue, we have another indication. The Jewish synagogue had elders (plural). They had a group of elders that ran the synagogue. However, even in the Jewish synagogue, there was a single elder who became the presiding elder. He was the chief elder. He was the ruling elder in the synagogue. So that even in the synagogue, they ended up with many elders, but one who became the chief.
3. One other element is a certain fact of human nature, and that fact is that, in any organization, somebody rises to the leadership and takes charge. People by nature prefer looking to an individual to be the leader. People by nature, even if a committee is supposed to rule, will finally look to one person on that committee who becomes the guiding light--the personality who is in charge. This fact is probably reflecting something that God put in us in a desire for an orderly channel of authority. The one man elder bishop certainly fits in with that kind of an orderly administration of authority within a local church.

**Review of Single Authority**

So for several reasons, for the matter of the large size of the cities, it took many churches within the city. Therefore, you would have many elders from one city--not from one church. There was also the problem of buildings. They had to have many congregations in the city. They couldn't all meet in one house. Because of the various descriptions that we have of the office of pastor in the singular, not in the plural, these are described in such a way that we have indication that there are many deacons, but one elder. We also have the fact that the word "apostle" is discontinued as the New Testament progresses, and "elder" is inserted because there's a change coming over. Because there was authority before the New Testament was written, we must expect the authority to exist in the congregation after it's written. The synagogue itself, which did have elders, had a single elder that took charge. Also, people in natural relationships look to somebody who should be in charge.

**The Authority of the Pastor**

So what authority does this elder pastor have? This is the problem. People say, "Well, if you have an elder bishop, you just have one man. He's in charge. He makes the decisions. He calls the play. He's the quarterback. You have a dictator." We're going to go into that a little more, but I just want to point out to you the subtlety of that argument. What that argument is saying is that if we have a group of men, like three, four, five, or six men on a board, they won't dictate. A committee won't dictate. Yet, the finest dictatorship in our day is the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Even out of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a chairman arises, and he takes charge. He is the top authority.

This is the most ludicrous argument, and you will get it from seminary graduates who are experienced in the Lord's work. They will look you straight in the eye and say, "Oh, I don't like that elder pastor bishop authority. He could be a dictator that way. If we have a committee, there won't be a dictatorship." The Roman Triumvirates were the most brutal dictatorship of all history, and they were a committee. It is much harder for a single elder bishop to try to play the role of a dictator than it is with a group of men in collusion with one another. I'll guarantee that. With one man under the eyes of all the congregation, it's hard to play the lording role of a dictator. It's far easier for a group of men to subtly set movements that they can handle and control among themselves.

What authority does the elder bishop pastor have? The single elder bishop pastor in each local church, as we've indicated, is the executive head of that organization. He's the final authority under the congregation in all practical purposes. All the church boards and the committees are under his authority. They are assisting him. The boards are not directing him. The single elder bishop retains the highest authority in that church until he is removed by the congregation.

**Elder**

What kind of authority does he have? Well, we have this indicated by these words such as "elder." "Elder" in the Greek is "presbuteros." "Presbuteros" simply means "the old man." It means this in the sense, not of age, but it means this in terms of maturity; in terms of suave; in terms of experience; in terms of being derogare; and, in terms of being with it. You can call the elder bishop "the old man" in that sense. It is his maturity and his experience. What this word stresses is his rank. His rank is that of pastor which is the highest rank within the local church under the congregation. He is their executive head. Therefore, he is called elder. The pastor is given the right to rule. This is recognized in Scripture (1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:2). I don't want to prolong this. Otherwise, I'd look up all these passages. I trust that you will do that. When you do, you will see very clearly from these passages that there is somebody in the local church whom God has ordained to run things.

You're going to have to decide whether you think it is one elder bishop pastor, or whether it is a committee of some kind, whatever you may call them. The rank and authority represented by this word "elder" are essential before this man can communicate the Word of God with authority. He communicates the Word of God as the Lord's representative. This does not mean that he cannot make a mistake in what he teaches you. This does not mean that he cannot teach you something that you can't quite go along with. Maybe later you'll discover how right he is, and you can always set those things aside. Remember that there is a right church for a right pastor as there is a right woman for a right man.

However, the day you get married (if you have not discovered this before, I'm going to clue you in), you're going to discover several things, not the least of which will be that the person you married is not perfect. You think that you are perfect, but what you married is far from perfect. This will gradually impress itself upon you. However, this does not mean that you are not the right man for that woman. Though you are not perfect, you do not separate because you discover imperfections in each other. The people who decide that the pastor they have is not for them because he is not perfect in some respect of their opinion are the mavericks who float around from church to church. If you ever separate yourself from your right woman through divorce, it is all downhill from then on. God will take your life, and He will stabilize you in playing you out someplace. However, if you had your right man or your right woman and you cut yourself off from that person through divorce, it is second-class citizenship from then on. The best has been left behind you. God in His grace will carry you through, but the best is left behind you.

The same thing, I think by analogy, can apply that if you leave your right pastor, your best spiritual days are behind you. You level out at a considerably lower level. The people who are looking for that perfect church and that perfect leadership are the church mavericks who are usually floating around from place to place. They're happy in a place as long as they don't know anybody. If it can be a big enough place where they don't know anybody, and they don't know the leadership, they're going to be happy because they're just ignorant of what's going on and of who is what. However, if it's small enough that they can discover that there is imperfection, then they chase off to find the will of the wisp of what they think is the perfect one elsewhere.

**Bishop**

Another term is the term "bishop" which is also indicative of authority. In the Greek, it is "episkopos." This stresses the nature of the work of the pastor in the local church. It means "overseer" or "manager." In the local church, he is, as executive head, the manager or the overseer of that work. He has authority in reference to supervision in the local church. The words "elder" and "bishop" apply to the same person. We see this in Acts 20:17. Paul refers to the group of leaders who have come to meet him from Ephesus by this word "presbuteros." He calls them elders. Then, in verse 28, speaking to these same men and describing these same men, he calls them "episkopoi." He calls them bishops. So, elder and bishop refer to the same man, and this man is the pastor of the local congregation, the man with the pastor-teacher gift. In Titus 1:5 and 7, we have this same interchange between the words "elder" and "bishop."

**Shepherd**

How is he appointed to this office? As we've indicated, the first stage of the appointment is that he has to recognize that he has the gift of pastor-teacher. This is a spiritual gift. He recognizes that he has it (1 Timothy 3:1). We have certain words here that are used in describing him. One that we've been using is the word "pastor." It is the Greek word "poimen." "Poimen" means "shepherd." This word "poimen" stresses the responsibility of the head of a local church. He who holds the office of pastor has the responsibility of being a shepherd. He is the under shepherd of Jesus Christ who is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4, John 10). He is responsible therefore to the Lord. He is also responsible to the congregation as a pastor. He is responsible to feed them; to guide them; and, to rule justly over them (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11ff, 1 Peter 5:2).

**Teacher**

There is another term that indicates the authority that he has, and that is teacher, which in the Greek is "didaskalos." "Didaskalos" stresses the communication part of his gift. He is, first of all, responsible to the congregation and to the Lord. He is responsible to carry the duty of shepherding the flock. He is also responsible for communicating the Word of God to them. He performs his job as pastor by teaching the flock Bible doctrine (again, Acts 20:28, Ephesus 4:11ff, 1 Peter 5:2). By teaching the Word of God, he feeds; he admonishes; and, he edifies the flock. In Greek, the word "teacher" in Ephesians 4:11 is connected with this word "pastor."

Just briefly, we've gone over this before, Ephesians 4:11 talks about the pastor-teacher. This has the word "the" in front of it: "the pastor." Then it has the word "and" connecting them (the Greek word "chi"). However, then there is no definite article with teacher: "the pastor and teacher." There is a rule in Greek grammar called Granville Sharp's Rule that when we have this kind of an arrangement grammatically, it indicates that both of these words unite to indicate one person. The second word, "teacher," in this case, is explaining the first word. It's amplifying it. So a pastor is explained as being a teacher. That's why we call this the pastor-teacher gift which is what this is referring to. It is a single gift, so it's combined in the Greek language. You can't see that in the English. It shows that the teacher and pastor are the same.

The assignment to a local church is ultimately the business of God the Holy Spirit. If it's going to be the right pastor with the right congregation, He has to do it (Acts 20:28). The office is actually secured by appointment at the point of his salvation. This is because when a future pastor is saved, he is given the pastor-teacher gift. The reason he's given the pastor-teacher gift is because someday he's going to be an elder bishop in charge of a local church ministry. So the selection begins actually at the point of salvation when he receives this gift (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:7). However, he is also duly appointed to a church by the congregation. At first, these elder bishops were appointed by the apostles or their delegates (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5). Now we have the qualifications in the New Testament.

Any time a church needs an elder bishop pastor, it reads what 1 Timothy tells about qualification. It reads what Titus describes as qualifications. Then they begin looking, among themselves first, to see if there is within them one whom God has raised up with the pastor-teacher gift, and whom the Lord is directing the minds of the congregation toward as being the one whom He has selected for this office. This is what God the Holy Spirit will do. So the Lord raises up the gift; He brings it into that congregation; He provides it; and, the people are to recognize it. When they recognize it, they have some kind of an organizational move, and they say, "You, henceforth, are now vested with the authority in this church of pastor-teacher. You are the final decision maker as of now in the conduct of this work. You are the administrator responsible for this flock." And he takes charge. Elder bishops do not appoint other elder bishops. That's the old apostolic succession game, and that isn't the way it goes.

So, here we have it. Within the local church, God has established a line of authority to replace that which was to die out with the apostles. That line of authority was centered upon one man who had a gift called the pastor-teacher gift. With the pastor-teacher gift, he was equipped and qualified to assume the role of elder bishop, combining the two terms, within that local congregation. He is placed in complete charge and authority in that work. He is responsible to the directors of the congregation for the policies agreed upon by the congregation; the nature of the work that the congregation will be engaged in; the places where it will spend its money; and, the directions in which it will give its thrust, and the emphasis. All of these things are the responsibility of the congregation. However, once these are decided, it is the elder bishop pastor who is the quarterback who calls the plays and who conducts the team. When there are disagreements, he acts as umpire. When he has spoken, that settles it.

There is one elder bishop responsible to the congregation and to God who carries the ministry of directing and administering that local church, with many many people required to assist him, in many many directions. Obviously, he couldn't get to first base if it wasn't for committees; if it wasn't for boards; and, if it wasn't for groups who are ready to come in and help. We have plenty of people who are coming around saying, "Here, you can have my job. You do it." And that job goes begging for somebody to do. What our God calls us to do is to find our place in the local ministry under the administration that He has ordained. That is an administration that brings maximum blessing; maximum orientation to God's point of view; and, maximum productivity of divine good.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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